



**Australian Government**  
**Attorney-General's Department**  
**Criminal Justice Division**

16 February 2016

Mr Stephen Palethorpe  
Committee Secretary  
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Palethorpe

I am writing in relation to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement's inquiry into human trafficking. This submission provides information about the Australian Government's response to human trafficking and slavery.<sup>1</sup> The submission has been prepared by the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) as chair of the Interdepartmental Committee on Human Trafficking and Slavery (IDC), on behalf of IDC member agencies. These agencies are:

- Australian Crime Commission (ACC)
- Australian Federal Police (AFP)
- Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC)
- Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP)
- Department of Employment
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Department of Social Services (DSS), and
- Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO).

Information in this submission is current at 30 January 2016.

**Australia's response to human trafficking and slavery**

Opportunities to traffic people into, or exploit people within, Australia are limited because of our strong migration controls, geographical isolation, and high degree of regulation,

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<sup>1</sup> For ease of reference, this document uses 'human trafficking and slavery' as a general term that encompasses slavery-like practices including servitude, forced labour, deceptive recruiting for labour or services, debt bondage and forced marriage.

compliance and enforcement. However, Australia is not entirely immune to these exploitative practices.

Australia is primarily a destination country for human trafficking and slavery, with the majority of trafficked people identified by Australian authorities to date being women from Asia who have been exploited within the sex work industry. However, it is important to note that cases of men and women exploited in situations outside the sex work industry, such as in the domestic work, hospitality and construction industries, or within intimate or family relationships, are now being identified by Australian authorities in numbers exceeding those identified as exploited within the sex work industry.

The Australian Government is committed to combating human trafficking and slavery, which are recognised as serious crimes with grave implications for human rights. A comprehensive whole-of-government strategy to combat these crimes was established in 2003, and commenced in 2004. Australia's strategy to combat human trafficking and slavery is founded on four central pillars: prevention and deterrence, detection and investigation, prosecution and compliance and victim support and protection. Together, these measures address the full cycle of human trafficking and slavery from recruitment to reintegration and give equal weight to the critical areas of prevention, enforcement and victim support.

Australia's strategy to combat human trafficking and slavery is guided by the *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015-19* (National Action Plan), which was launched on 2 December 2014. The National Action Plan provides the strategic framework for Australia's response to human trafficking and slavery and sets clear goals and action items which align to Australia's domestic laws and international obligations and which are underpinned by key performance indicators for monitoring purposes. These are supported by a series of guiding principles, which provide the high-level and strategic foundation for the National Action Plan. The National Action Plan replaced Australia's original 2004 *National Plan of Action to Eradicate Trafficking in Persons*, which has been superseded by policy and legislative changes.

The IDC is responsible for oversight of Australia's strategy to combat human trafficking and slavery, including monitoring its implementation, reporting to the Australian Government on its effectiveness, and ensuring that emerging issues are addressed on a whole-of-government basis. Relevant agencies remain responsible for administering individual components of the strategy.

An Operational Working Group (OWG) chaired by AGD with membership from AFP, CDPP, DIBP and DSS has also been established as a subcommittee of the IDC to resolve systemic operational issues that arise in the management of individual cases. The OWG meets on a six-weekly basis and has an important role in referring emerging policy issues for the IDC's consideration.

## Legal frameworks

Australia's legal frameworks reflect our international obligations to address human trafficking and slavery. Australia ratified the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (Trafficking Protocol), which supplements the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (UNTOC), in 2005. The Trafficking Protocol is the first global legally binding instrument with an agreed definition of trafficking in persons.

Australia is also a party to a number of other international instruments that form part of the legal framework on trafficking, including the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and its Optional Protocols on *the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*, and on *involvement of children in armed conflict*, the *Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery*, and several International Labour Organization conventions relating to forced labour, including the *Forced Labour Convention, 1930* (No. 29), the *Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957* (No. 105), and the *Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999* (No. 182).

### Criminal Code Act 1995

The Australian Government has comprehensively criminalised human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices under the Commonwealth *Criminal Code Act 1995*. Division 270 of the Criminal Code criminalises slavery and slavery-like practices, including servitude, forced labour and deceptive recruiting. These offences can apply to the exploitation of a person's labour or services in any industry, including the sex work industry. Forced marriage is also considered a slavery-like practice under Division 270. None of the Division 270 offences require the victim to be subject to an element of physical movement.

Division 271 of the Criminal Code contains specific offences for trafficking in persons and debt bondage. The offences in Division 271 are not limited to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation; they cover trafficking in all its forms, including trafficking in children and organ trafficking. Penalties for the human trafficking and slavery-related offences in the Criminal Code range from four years' imprisonment for debt bondage to 25 years' imprisonment for slavery and child trafficking.

The Australian Government is committed to monitoring the human trafficking and slavery-related offences to ensure they remain robust and responsive to emerging trends. In recent years, improvements to Divisions 270 and 271 have been made by the *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery-like Conditions and People Trafficking) Act 2013*, which criminalised forced marriage and harbouring a victim, created standalone offences of forced labour and organ trafficking, and clarified and broadened existing provisions; the

*Crimes Legislation Amendment (Psychoactive Substances and Other Measures) Act 2015*, which clarified that the slavery offences have universal jurisdiction; and the *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Powers, Offences and Other Measures) Act 2015*, which expanded the definition of forced marriage and increased the penalties.

#### *Crimes Act 1914*

The Commonwealth *Crimes Act 1914* provides protections for trafficked people when giving evidence in court. Under Part IAD of the Crimes Act, trafficked people can give evidence by closed-circuit television, video-link or video recording, have their contact with the defendant or members of the public limited, and have a support person with them while they give evidence. Part IAD also makes it an offence to publish material identifying a trafficked person, and allows trafficked people to make victim impact statements to the court outlining the harm they have experienced. The Crimes Act also allows a court to order that an offender make reparation to the victim for any loss suffered or any expense incurred by reason of the offence.

#### *Migration Act 1958*

Under the Commonwealth *Migration Act 1958* it is an offence to allow, or continue to allow, an unlawful non-citizen to work, or allow, or continue to allow, a lawful non-citizen to work where that person is working in breach of a work-related condition on a visa. It is also an offence to refer an unlawful non-citizen to a third person for work or refer a lawful non-citizen to a third person for work that would breach a work-related condition on a visa. The penalty for committing such an offence is two years' imprisonment. The Migration Act escalates these offences to aggravated offences with a penalty of five years' imprisonment if the worker is being exploited and the offender knows of, or is reckless as to, that circumstance.

It is also an offence under the Migration Act, punishable by a range of penalties including imprisonment, to contrive a marriage or illegitimate partner relationship for the purpose of obtaining a visa. These offences also capture conduct by third party facilitators.

In December 2015, new criminal and civil penalties were introduced to the Migration Act including strengthened visa cancellation provisions introduced as part of the 'paying for visa sponsorship' framework. This framework provides for sanctions to be imposed on a person who asks for, receives, offers to provide or provides a benefit in return for visa sponsorship or employment sponsorship in relation to a temporary or permanent visa. The new legislative framework 'paying for visa sponsorship' allows for appropriate action to be taken against any persons or third party entities involved in such conduct.

### Fair Work Act 2009

The Commonwealth *Fair Work Act 2009* empowers the FWO to enforce compliance with the Fair Work Act and related instruments. The Fair Work Act contains minimum entitlements for all employees in the federal workplace system. The FWO's jurisdiction extends to ensuring that all workers in Australia receive these workplace rights, including foreign workers on short or long-term visas and international students.

### Marriage Act 1961

Under the Commonwealth *Marriage Act 1961*, it is an offence for a person to solemnise, or purport to solemnise, a marriage if the person has reason to believe that one or both of the parties are not of marriageable age. It is also an offence under the Marriage Act for a person to go through a form or ceremony of marriage with a person who is not of marriageable age.

### Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

The Commonwealth *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002* provides a scheme for tracing, restraining and confiscating the proceeds of crimes against Australian law, including human trafficking and slavery. These proceeds can then be returned to the Australian community to fund anti-crime initiatives.

### State and territory legislation

State and territory governments are responsible for regulating the sex work industry in Australia. Most jurisdictions have enacted legislation relating to sexual servitude and deceptive recruiting which would allow for the prosecution of cases involving sexual exploitation. However, in practice, state and territory police services generally refer human trafficking and slavery-related matters to the AFP. All jurisdictions have a range of offence provisions to cover related crimes such as assault, sexual assault, forced prostitution, kidnapping and deprivation of liberty. State offences may be used in conjunction with Commonwealth offences.

### Investigations and prosecutions

Human trafficking and slavery-related investigations are a high priority for the AFP. In determining which matters to prioritise, the AFP uses the Case Categorisation and Prioritisation Model (CCPM). Considerations when assessing a crime under the CCPM include incident type and the impact of the matter on Australian society. Generally, human trafficking and slavery-related offences will be assessed as having a very high impact and are considered a high priority crime type.

The AFP has a dedicated Human Trafficking Team to investigate human trafficking and slavery-related matters, both proactively and through referrals from other Commonwealth or

state and territory government agencies, industry, unions or non-government organisations (NGOs). As state and territory police may identify human trafficking and slavery matters before the AFP, and investigations may overlap, the AFP collaborates closely with state and territory police. Between 2004 and 31 December 2015, the AFP received 619 referrals for human trafficking and slavery-related matters. In 2015, approximately 21 per cent of the new human trafficking or slavery-related investigations undertaken by the AFP related to sexual exploitation. Twenty-three per cent of new investigations during this period related to other forms of labour exploitation and 44 per cent related to forced marriage. The remainder of investigations related to other forms of human trafficking and slavery.

The investigation of matters involving human trafficking and slavery can be protracted, complex and resource intensive, particularly given their often transnational nature. There are significant practical challenges in investigating crime across international borders, including the challenges of communication, and differences in the role of national institutions, legal and political systems. Victims, offenders and evidence can be located in more than one country, and the same set of circumstances can generate investigations and prosecutions in more than one jurisdiction. The AFP maintains an extensive network of officers posted to Australia's overseas missions, who provide a conduit for Australian and overseas law enforcement agencies to exchange information and progress these investigations.

Securing prosecutions is a key objective of the Australian Government strategy to combat human trafficking and slavery. The CDPP is an independent prosecuting service established by the Australian Parliament to prosecute offences against Commonwealth law. The CDPP has no investigative function, and matters are referred to the CDPP from the AFP and other investigative agencies. Decisions about whether to proceed with human trafficking or slavery-related prosecutions are guided by the *Prosecution Policy of the Commonwealth*.

To date, 17 people have been convicted of human trafficking and slavery offences in Australia since 2004. Ten of those individuals were convicted of slavery offences, four of servitude offences and three of human trafficking offences. One of the human trafficking convictions was for a matter involving labour exploitation. As at 30 January 2016, there were two human trafficking and slavery matters before the courts, involving four defendants.

In appropriate cases, the CDPP also provides advice to agencies during an investigation before a brief of evidence is referred. Between July 2014 and January 2016, the CDPP provided advice to the AFP and state and territory police in relation to over 50 investigations, covering a range of human trafficking and slavery-related allegations, including forced marriage, servitude, forced labour, and debt bondage.

### **Protections for vulnerable workers**

Forced labour is a type of exploitation for which people may be trafficked into, from, or within Australia, but not all victims of forced labour are trafficked. Australian citizens and

permanent residents may experience substandard working conditions and more serious forms of exploitation, including slavery, servitude and forced labour, within Australia.

Migrant and other foreign workers can be particularly vulnerable to substandard working conditions and more serious forms of exploitation, either by those who facilitate their journey to Australia or by employers once they arrive. This may be because of cultural and language barriers, a lack of knowledge of local workplace laws and standards, and in some cases, their reliance on their employer for their immigration status.

There is an important distinction to be drawn between people in circumstances of forced labour or other serious forms of exploitation, and those who may experience substandard working conditions. However, substandard working conditions, including the underpayment of wages, are not acceptable in Australia, and may be an indicator of more serious exploitation.

The FWO places a strong emphasis on assisting vulnerable foreign workers and has developed strong relationships with other government regulators to effectively respond to suspected instances of serious labour exploitation. While human trafficking and slavery-related offences do not fall within its operational remit, the FWO has conducted awareness campaigns regarding minimum wages and conditions of employment under the Fair Work Act and pursues civil efforts through the courts for workplace contraventions such as underpayment of wages. FWO has developed strong relationships with other government regulators to effectively respond to suspected instances of human trafficking and slavery. In particular, the agency has a well-established relationship with the AFP for the referral of information.

DIBP works closely with the FWO to support its enforcement role. As part of this relationship, Taskforce Cadena has been established to target entities involved in unscrupulous labour hire practices. Suspected instances of human trafficking and slavery uncovered by this initiative are referred to the AFP for investigation.

DIBP's approach to reducing instances of illegal work is through: building awareness of the consequences of employing illegal workers; creating a credible threat of the consequences for employers and employees engaging in illegal work activity; and sanctioning businesses that commit work related breaches of the Migration Act or persist in employing illegal workers. The aim of all prevention, deterrence, detection and enforcement activity is to encourage voluntary compliance with migration laws.

There are various safeguards under migration legislation and policy to mitigate and address the risks of labour market exploitation depending on the circumstances of the case. Criminal, civil and administrative sanctions, as well as visa cancellation and application refusal powers are used under these frameworks to address breaches of the Migration Act.

### **Criminal methodology**

In Australia, human trafficking and slavery matters have largely involved small crime groups, rather than large organised crime groups. These small crime groups use family or business contacts overseas to facilitate recruitment, movement and visa fraud. Human trafficking and slavery matters often also involve or have links to other crime types, including migration fraud, identity fraud, document fraud and money laundering.

Research undertaken by the AIC has shown that offenders convicted of human trafficking and slavery offences under the Criminal Code often share similar backgrounds, experiences and characteristics with their victims. As well as being of the same sex, offenders often share similar cultural, language, socio-economic and migration backgrounds and work histories with their victims. Female offenders may also have prior histories of victimisation.

Human trafficking does not imply illegal entry. The vast majority of suspected victims who have travelled to Australia have done so on a legitimate visa, though visa and migration fraud may later become apparent. Visa and migration fraud occurs in two main forms – the use of legitimate visas obtained fraudulently (for example where applicants make false claims or use different identities to meet visa requirements) or the use of fraudulent travel documents such as visas and passports. Suspected victims may enter Australia on a variety of visa classes, including visitor, student, and temporary work visas. Some visas have expired by the time their holders are located, making them unlawful ‘overstayers’, while the immigration status of others remains lawful.

DIBP maintains various measures to guard and enhance the integrity of visa programmes against visa fraud (including document fraud) and other forms of fraudulent activity used to facilitate human trafficking and slavery. DIBP monitors visa programme trends and integrity and responds to emerging concerns through a measured and targeted approach. Monitoring and addressing suspect activities within visa programmes strengthens the detection, prevention and deterrence of exploitation. The enforcement of migration laws further acts as a deterrent against breaches and illegal activity.

### **Support for Trafficked People Program**

The Australian Government provides a comprehensive range of support services for trafficked people through the Support for Trafficked People Program (Support Program), which is administered by DSS. The Australian Red Cross has been funded to provide individualised case management services for the Support Program since 2009. The Red Cross provides a 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year national response within all states and territories in Australia. The Red Cross allocates an individual case manager to each client referred to the Support Program. Case managers are responsible for ensuring the appropriate delivery of support services tailored to meet the client’s individual needs.



Red Cross case managers help clients to access a range of support services to improve their mental and physical health and well-being, and to provide opportunities to learn new skills and develop options for life after exiting the Support Program. These services may include:

- case management support
- suitable accommodation that meets the AFP's security and safety requirements
- medical treatment (through Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, or as approved)
- counselling
- referral to legal and migration advice
- appropriate skills development training, including English language and vocational guidance, where appropriate, and
- social support.

Clients who have dependent children living with them may receive assistance with arranging childcare, schooling, counselling and medical support. They can also be assisted to access parenting support or education.

The Support Program is divided into the following streams:

- *Assessment and Intensive Support Stream* – intensive support for up to 45 days to all trafficked people referred by the AFP, irrespective of whether they are willing or able to assist with the investigation or prosecution of a human trafficking or slavery-related offence. If the person is not an Australian citizen and does not have a valid visa, they can be granted a Bridging F visa (BVF). The Assessment and Intensive Support Stream provides a recovery and reflection period for trafficked people to assess their options. Trafficked people on the Assessment and Intensive Support Stream have access to the following support as needed: case management support; secure accommodation; a living allowance; an amount for the purchase of essentials such as clothing and toiletries; access to health care, including counselling; access to interpreters; and access to legal and migration advice.
- *Extended Intensive Support Stream* – access to a further 45 days' support for trafficked people who are willing, but not able, to assist with the investigation or prosecution of a human trafficking or slavery-related offence, for reasons including ill health, trauma or practical impediment. This extended period of support is provided on a case-by-case basis and is designed to provide flexibility in the support available to trafficked people. The Extended Intensive Support Stream is automatically available to clients under the age of 18, if it is in their best interests.
- *Justice Support Stream* – longer-term support until the investigation and prosecution of a human trafficking or slavery-related matter is finalised. On the Justice Support Stream, clients have access to the following support as needed: assistance with securing

longer-term accommodation; assistance to purchase essential furniture and household items; access to Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme; access to legal services and interpreters; assistance to obtain employment and training (including English-language training) if desired; links to social support; as well as case management support.

- *Temporary Trial Support Stream* – intensive support (similar to that provided under the Assessment and Intensive Support Stream) for trafficked people giving evidence pertaining to a human trafficking or slavery-related prosecution. Clients are entitled to short-term accommodation and a weekly living allowance.

There is also a 20-day transition period for trafficked people leaving the Support Program.

Eligibility for the Support Program is determined by the AFP and is based on whether a person is, or may have been, the victim of a human trafficking or slavery-related offence. The person must also be an Australian citizen, or hold a valid visa. Between 1 January 2004 and 31 December 2015, the AFP referred 293 suspected trafficked people to the Support Program. Of these referrals, 188 people (0 m/188 f) were exploited in the sex work industry, and 105 (37 m/68 f) were subject to exploitation outside the sex work industry. Of the 105, 16 (1 m/15 f) were identified as being in, or at risk of, forced marriage.

### **Human Trafficking Visa Framework**

The government's comprehensive Human Trafficking Visa Framework, administered by DIBP, enables foreign nationals who do not already hold a valid visa and are suspected victims of human trafficking or slavery to remain lawfully in the Australian community. Like Australian citizens and other valid visa holders who are suspected trafficked people, they are then able to access support through the Support Program.

The Human Trafficking Visa Framework comprises two visas:

- *Bridging F visa (BVF)*: a person assessed by the AFP as a suspected trafficked person may be eligible for a BVF for up to 45 days for an initial period of rest and recovery. A BVF can also be granted to immediate family members in Australia. There is also an option to grant a second BVF for a further 45 days (making up to 90 days available) for additional rest and recovery.

If a trafficked person is required to remain in Australia to assist authorities with an investigation or prosecution, another longer-term BVF can be granted for the duration of the criminal justice process. People granted this BVF are permitted to work. These BVF holders may depart Australia and re-enter, provided they are still required to assist authorities with the criminal justice process. Prior to 2015 reforms to the Human Trafficking Visa Framework, trafficked people participating in a criminal justice process were generally granted Criminal Justice Stay visas (CJSVs).

- *Referred Stay (Permanent) visa (RSV)*: a trafficked person may be eligible for a RSV if they have made a contribution to, and cooperated closely with, an investigation into a human trafficking, slavery or slavery-like offence, and would be in danger if returned to their home country. This visa allows the holder to remain in Australia permanently, and immediate family members may be included in the visa application. Prior to July 2015, the RSV was titled the Witness Protection (Trafficking) (Permanent) visa (WPTV).

Between 1 January 2004 and 31 December 2015, DIBP granted 256 BVFs, 223 CJSVs, 127 permanent WPTVs, and four RSVs to suspected trafficked people and immediate family members.

### **Training for Australian government officials**

The Australian Government invests in training programs for law enforcement, immigration compliance and Australian diplomatic and consular officials overseas to ensure they are equipped to recognise the indicators of human trafficking and slavery and to respond appropriately.

The AFP runs an annual Human Trafficking Investigations Course that is designed to advance expertise in areas critical to the successful investigation of human trafficking and slavery, including legislation, investigative methodologies, interviewing and victim liaison and support. The course is funded by the AFP and includes training sessions run by NGOs and other government agencies. Since 2004, 259 investigators have completed the course, including 178 AFP investigators, 11 DIBP staff, 49 state and territory investigators from all jurisdictions, and 21 investigators from foreign police services including Canada, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

The CDPP regularly liaises nationally and regionally with a variety of agencies involved in the criminal justice response to human trafficking and slavery, including the AFP, state and territory police, DIBP, and Australian Border Force investigators. The CDPP provides training to these agencies and their investigators in relation to issues arising in the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking and slavery-related cases, including at the Human Trafficking Investigations Course.

DIBP provides training on human trafficking indicators to staff across the department, with a particular focus on field officers and Human Trafficking Contact Officers of the Australian Border Force, in order to equip them with knowledge to better detect and support suspected trafficked people. Training is also provided to all officers who are due to be posted to work in the DIBP's overseas network. Additional briefing is especially given to those being posted to human trafficking source countries from where Australia is targeted as a destination country.

All DFAT officers who are posted overseas are required to report any information relating to the possible or attempted commission of serious extraterritorial offences, including human

trafficking. This ensures that, where appropriate, such matters are referred to Australian law enforcement authorities. Prior to being posted, diplomatic and consular officials receive training on the management and referral of cases involving forced marriage.

### **International engagement to address human trafficking and slavery**

Australia continues to work at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels to tackle human trafficking and slavery in all its forms. In particular, Australia is internationally recognised as a leader in combating human trafficking and slavery in South East Asia. Over the past decade, Australia has invested significant resources to improve the capacity of partner countries' criminal justice sectors to tackle these crimes, including through the *Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons, and Related Transnational Crime* (Bali Process). Through the aid programme, and in particular the Australia-Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Australia works with partner governments to strengthen national and regional criminal justice responses to human trafficking, enhance regional cooperation and promote gender and victim sensitive approaches. Australia's aid programme also seeks to promote safe and legal migration within the region and combats key factors which make people vulnerable to exploitation, such as poverty and a lack of education or employment.

AGD operates in partnership with AFP and CDPP in engaging with international organisations, including visiting international delegations interested in learning from Australia's law enforcement response to human trafficking and slavery. In 2015, AGD, the AFP and the CDPP hosted and delivered presentations to delegations from the Singaporean Ministry of Manpower and a delegation of Senior State Counsel from Sri Lanka.

### **Building partnerships with the community and practical support for non-government organisations to address human trafficking and slavery in Australia**

The Australian Government is committed to building and maintaining strong relationships with the non-government sector, including through the National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery (National Roundtable).

The National Roundtable is an important consultative mechanism between government, NGOs, business and industry, and unions, with a focus on emerging issues relating to human trafficking and slavery in Australia and beyond. Since 2008, the National Roundtable has been convened annually by the Commonwealth Minister responsible for human trafficking and slavery. The National Roundtable Senior Officials' Meeting is a less formal meeting also held on an annual basis to supplement the ministerial-level National Roundtable.

Working with NGOs, including those from a range of backgrounds and philosophies, is an important aspect of the Australian Government's strategy to combat human trafficking and slavery. NGOs play a key role in identifying and supporting trafficked people, as well as raising awareness of all forms of human trafficking and slavery in Australia.

Since 2008, the Australian Government has committed over \$3.8 million to support four NGOs in their efforts to combat human trafficking and slavery. Anti-Slavery Australia, Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH), Project Respect, and Scarlet Alliance use this funding to provide outreach for trafficked people and conduct education and awareness-raising initiatives on human trafficking and slavery issues. This funding will expire in 2017. Between 2011-13, the Australian Government also awarded almost \$500,000 to the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Australian Hotels Association, Asian Women at Work, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, and the Red Cross to undertake projects to combat labour exploitation in Australian industries.

In 2014, the Australian Government awarded a total of \$485,925 in further funding to three specialist NGOs over three years to progress outreach, education and awareness-raising activities on forced marriage issues. Anti-Slavery Australia received \$355,393 to develop and administer a dedicated website to provide people in, or at risk of, forced marriage with information, advice and links to support services. The website, *My Blue Sky*, was launched on 25 November 2015 and also includes a helpline and a free legal advice service primarily delivered by text message and email. ACRATH received \$61,000 to develop a unit of work and resource kit for teachers, school support staff and students in pilot schools across Australia. The Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCHR) received \$69,532 to develop a pilot education and training program aimed at increasing the capacity of frontline organisations in vulnerable communities. The ACRATH and AMWCHR projects were pilots and were completed in December 2015.

I trust this information is of assistance, and would be happy to assist the Committee by providing additional detail as required.

Yours sincerely

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